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At the September 19, 2003 Court Reporters Board (CRB) meeting, the Board approved an evaluation to review the verbatim reporting and transcript preparation skills of voicewriters. The purpose of this document is to outline the basis for that decision and to identify the preliminary results of that evaluation.

Substantial changes in technology continue to impact the reporting profession, including the introduction of portable laptop computers, CAT software systems and Internet access that has enabled reporters to produce transcripts more quickly and arguably more accurately. Computerization has modified note storage environments (via digital CDs, webstorage) and transcript transfer via the Internet. Additional advances in streaming videos have allowed the use of immediate testimony feedback when multiple computers can be linked and all parties can see the text at the same time.

The Court Reporters Board of California has been proactive in reviewing issues and technology that impact the reporting industry, and has incorporated many of these changes into the examination system while maintaining its mandate for consumer protection. Within the last three years, the Board has authorized the use of CAT technology and paperless stenographic machines into the official CRB test environment.

The Voicewriting evaluation consisted of the following elements:

- Notification of the opportunity to participate in the project
- Completion by interested parties of an application review process
- Providing selected participants with Board grading criteria (i.e., information provided to all candidates in the standard board application package)
- Adherence during the evaluation to the CR Board test administration procedures and security requirements.
- Completion of the Boards' December 2003 dictation exercise
- Evaluation of the dictation exercise
- Publishing of the evaluation results

The Board has not taken any position on the efficacy of voicewriting as a mechanism to produce the verbatim record in California. Under California law the practice of shorthand reporting is defined as "the making, by means of written symbols or abbreviations in shorthand or machine shorthand writing...". The use of voicewriting does not meet the definition for licensure in California.

It is planned that additional statistics and an agenda item be available for the March Board meeting in Los Angeles. The Boards' Web site will be updated with the meeting date as soon as it is available.